

Amendments to the Specification:

1. Please replace paragraph [0002] with the following amended paragraph:

[0002] The present application claims ~~priority~~ benefit to United States Provisional Application Serial No. 60/434,147, filed December 17, 2002.

2. Please replace paragraph [0008] with the following amended paragraph:

[0008] In some embodiments of the present invention, microwave radiation is used to crosslink or fuse carbon nanotubes together. In some embodiments, this provides for larger bundles or ropes of carbon nanotubes, and ropes where many of the strands are fused together. In some embodiments, this provides for “welded” nanotube junctions. In some embodiments, this provides for macroscopic objects. In some embodiments, blocks comprising a particular type of carbon nanotube, for example single-wall carbon nanotube “buckyrocks,” (formations of all or predominantly nanotubes) are exposed to microwave radiation such that they are joined together via carbon nanotube crosslinking at surface or edge regions of the blocks or throughout the blocks. *See* commonly-assigned, ~~co-pending~~ United States Patent Application Serial No. 10/391,988, filed March 19, 2003 (Smalley *et al.*), ~~Pub. No. US 2003/0211028 A1~~ which issued as United States Patent No. 6,899,945 on May 31, 2005.

3. Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following amended paragraph:

[0042] Composites and/or blends comprising carbon nanotubes, according to the present invention, generally comprise carbon nanotubes dispersed in a host matrix. Suitable host matrices include, but are not limited to, polymeric species, ceramic species, and combinations thereof. Exemplary polymeric species include, but are ~~ne~~ not limited to, species which undergo thermally-induced crosslinking, photolytically-induced crosslinking, species which require thermal curing, species which require photolytically-induced curing, and combinations thereof.